

Where Is Epicurus In The "School of Athens"?

Post by "Eikadistes" of May 20, 2021 at 4:40 PM

From whom, *specifically*, might Raphael have seen the image?

I agree that it is a reasonable generalization to suppose that one of the hundreds of affluent, Italian benefactors of the Renaissance had access to Epicurus ... but it's hard to prove, especially when we consider that Epicurean literature was *just* re-discovered, and then proceeded to suffer several hundred years of misinterpretation by enthusiasts.

I think it's imperative to our conclusion that we identify the name of this individual who owned Epicurean memorabilia, because that person would be more significant to the history of Epicurean philosophy than either Poggio Bracciolini and Pierre Gassendi.

If someone had preserved a ring of Epicurus, and recognized the significance of it, they, themselves, would very likely be Epicurean-sympathizers, or Epicureans, themselves. Even Poggio was unconvinced by the the conclusions he read in *De Rerum Natura*. This would imply that a community was in Italy in the 15th-century that was actively dedicated to preserving Epicurean philosophy. This *could* be the case, but it would change history.

Even so, it's not even enough to prove that there were Epicureans in Italy at the time.

We need to demonstrate that (1) *not only* was Epicurean philosophy understood to a thorough level within one century of the rediscovery of *De Rerum Natura* (2) *not only* was Raphael familiar with this knowledge, but, *most importantly*, (3) that a 25-year-old Renaissance painter was dedicated enough to Epicurean philosophy to have chosen to risk his career by painting the Ultimate Anti-Apostle on a fresco in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican. It's an incredibly bold move, and Raphael did not do it for our unique benefit.